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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6050

May 21, 2007

Honorable Robert Gates
Secretary of Defense
The Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

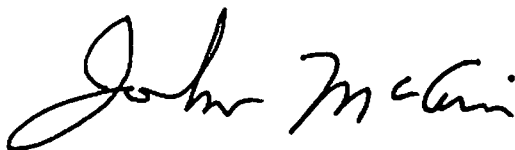
Dear Mr. Secretary:

We are aware of the continuing controversy regarding the technical capabilities of commercially available individual body armor. Recent press reports raise questions about the fairness and reliability of Army tests of a commercially available body armor and whether it fails, meets, or exceeds the military's ballistic protection requirements.

We are convinced that the Department of Defense must definitively and officially determine the facts regarding the protective qualities of the body armor we are currently providing our troops and that of any other commercially available comparable and competing system. Accordingly, we request that you order the Director, Defense Research and Engineering, under the oversight of the Director, Operational Test and Evaluation, to conduct a comprehensive technical assessment of the individual body armor systems currently available in the domestic market that claim to be capable of level IV protection.

We ask that you complete these tests as soon as possible and provide us with both classified and unclassified results. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



John McCain
Ranking Member



Carl Levin
Chairman